



MON 8/30

- ✓ READ 1 Peter 2:9
- ✓ THOUGHT You have a purpose! "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." [NIV] We were each created to accomplish the mission of sharing God's light with the world. How will you live out that purpose this week?
- ✓ PRAYER God, help me keep in mind what I was created to do as I prioritize my time this week. Help me make room for things that count. Amen.

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TUES 8/31

- ✓ READ Proverbs 19:21
- ✓ THOUGHT God has a plan. "Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails." [NIV] If our plans don't include readying ourselves for what God has for us to do, we need to step back and reevaluate. It is critical that we prepare our hearts by spending focused time with God.
- ✓ PRAYER God, I want to grow in your love so I can effectively serve you and the people you have placed in my life. Help me consistently seek your presence. Amen.

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WED 9/1

- ✓ READ Ephesians 2:10
- ✓ THOUGHT Your work is unique! "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." [NIV] God has created each one of us with unique abilities designed to make a difference in the world. Your talents matter in the kingdom of God, and you only have so much time! God planned in advance what you were meant to accomplish.
- ✓ PRAYER God, help me to actively work to try to discover the unique part that I am meant to play in your kingdom. I don't want to miss what you have for me to do. Amen.

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THURS 9/2

- ✓ READ Philippians 4:19
- ✓ THOUGHT God is your source. "My God will meet your every need out of his riches in the glory that is found in Christ Jesus." [CEB] We must keep returning to God to fill up our spiritual lamps. When we are feeling dry and out of energy, we can remember that God is the source of all things.
- ✓ PRAYER Mighty God, strengthen me and empower me to be able to share your love in every way that I can. Amen.

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FRI 9/3

- ✓ READ Psalm 90:12
- ✓ THOUGHT Your time matters! "Teach us to number our days so we can have a wise heart." [CEB] We must live like it is important to know Jesus because our time on earth is short. There is no time to waste in sharing the love of God with the people in our lives. In order to share God's love, we need to experience it first! How can you connect to God today?
- ✓ PRAYER Loving God, thank you for the good news of Jesus. Help me to live like it matters, and to be ready to share it. Amen.

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SAT 9/4

- ✓ READ Ephesians 5:8
- ✓ THOUGHT You are light! "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth." [CEB] For our lights to shine, we must stay connected to the source. When we live with God's Spirit guiding our steps, we will share goodness, justice and truth with the people in our circles.
- ✓ PRAYER Light of the world, I give you praise for the difference you make in my life. Help me not to neglect my time spent connecting with you. Amen.

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GROUP GUIDE – BRIDESMAIDS

- ✓ **PRAYER** **God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.**

- ✓ **BIG IDEA** **God is our source of light and life. Our connection with God helps us to be ready for the work that has been planned for us, and to be able to be a light even when we walk through the most difficult of times.**

- ✓ **READ** **Matthew 25:1-13**

- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 young bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom. Now five of them were wise, and the other five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps but didn't bring oil for them. But the wise ones took their lamps and also brought containers of oil." [CEB] The bridesmaids who were called "wise" planned and prepared for who was coming. Let's put this in the context of our every day. What do you think it means for us to be ready for Jesus in the here and now?
 - "When the groom was late in coming, they all became drowsy and went to sleep. But at midnight there was a cry, 'Look, the groom! Come out to meet him.'" [CEB] None of us knows how much time we will enjoy on this earth. If we are each created with a unique mission to accomplish in the specific time we have been given, maybe readiness has to do with time management. Discuss your thoughts about this idea. How is this going in your life? What are specific things you feel like God is nudging you to spend more time doing?
 - "Then all the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps. But the foolish bridesmaids said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps have gone out.' But the wise bridesmaids replied, 'No, because if we share with you, there won't be enough for our lamps and yours.'" [CEB] If the lamps and oil represent our connection with God as our source of light, what is our responsibility in keeping the lamps lit? Can we "borrow" spirituality from another or survive on someone else's faith?
 - Share with the group some ways you have cultivated a deeper connection with God. Can you think of any out-of-box activities that might help you connect with God in new ways?

- ✓ **Pray** **Light of the world, we want to be ready for the work you have laid out for us. Help us to constantly seek you as our source of life and to be intentional about having our own spiritual experiences so we can learn and grow in your love. Amen.**